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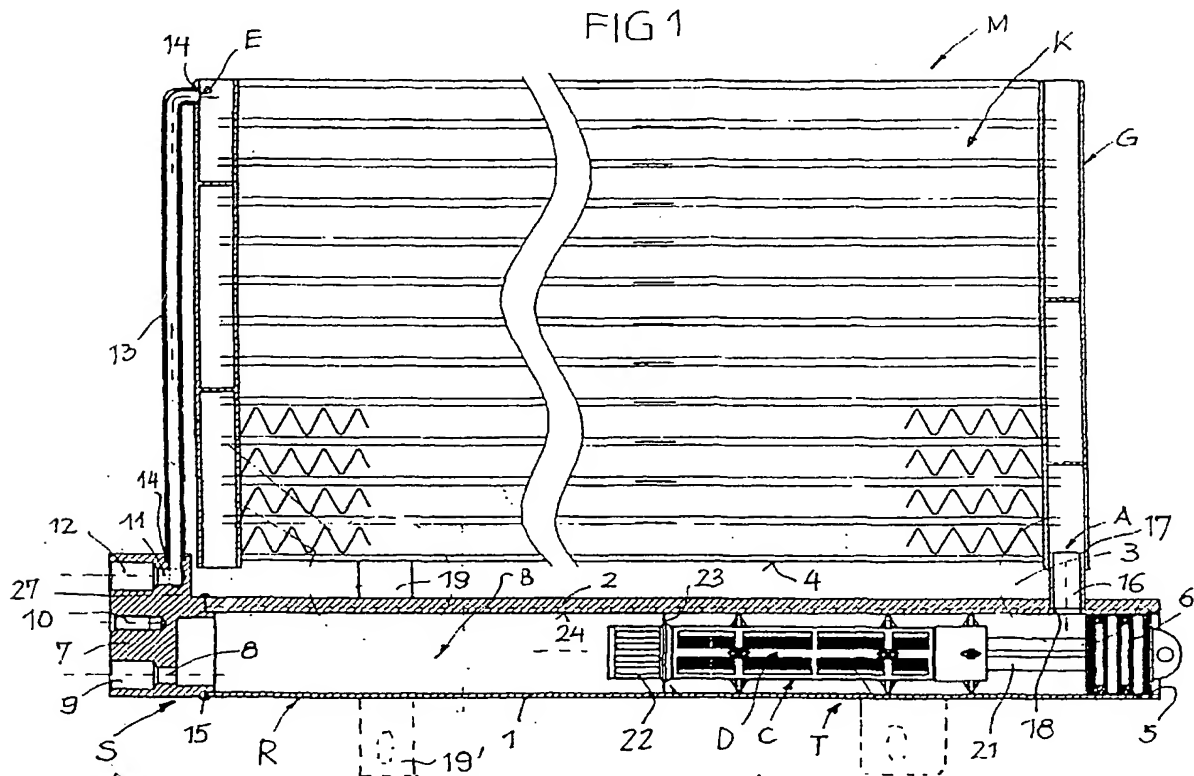
Remarks:

Amended claims in accordance with Rule 86 (2)
EPC.

(54) Condenser module and dryer

(57) In a condenser module M for vehicular air-conditioning systems a sub-cooler part positioned below a condenser part is constituted by a sub-cooler tube body R structurally separated from said condenser part K,

said tube body extending substantially parallel to and along a lower side 4 of said condenser casing G and containing a dryer as well as at least one collector chamber B for refrigerant.



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Description

[0001] The invention relates to a condenser module according to the preamble part of claim 1 as well as to a dryer according to the preamble part of claim 15.

[0002] In a condenser module as known from EP 0 689 014 A, DE 43 19 293 A and DE 44 02 927 A, a sub-cooler section is provided within the condenser casing and in the NOCOLOK-brazed flat tube condenser, said sub-cooler section forming an integrated sub-cooler. A connection line leads from the outlet of the sub-cooler to a dryer located at the side of the condenser casing, said dryer containing the dryer equipment.

[0003] In a condenser module as known from EP 0 480 330 a small dryer container is directly mounted to the condenser casing by means of a mounting block, said dryer container serving to receive just a refrigerant amount of the condenser flowing in a by-pass. Fluid-tight connections are made by mounting said mounting block. In case that a sub-cooler is needed this will be integrated into the condenser casing.

[0004] In a condenser module as known from EP 0 769 666 A the dryer containing the dryer equipment directly is secured at the condenser casing by a mounting block which when mounted simultaneously provides fluid-tight connections. Said dryer may have an oval extruded casing with cooling fins and is mounted separately at the side of the condenser casing. In case that a sub-cooler is provided this is integrated into the condenser casing.

[0005] It a collector tube of a condenser (DE-U-200 04 438) a removable filter cartridge containing a desiccant charge is inserted such that all of the refrigerant has to pass said cartridge. The collector tube is closed by a detachable plug. Said plug is an integrated part of said cartridge.

[0006] It is a task of the invention to provide a condenser module and a dryer as mentioned above, both allowing a fair cost, compact structure despite a sub-cooler function.

[0007] Said task can be achieved by the features of claim 1 or the features of parallel independent claim 15.

[0008] The sub-cooler tube body forms outside of the condenser casing there or a sub-cooler section of the condenser module. Within the region below the lower side of the compact condenser casing even under narrow mounting conditions sufficient space is provided to mount the separate sub-cooler tube body with customised dimensions for the required sub-cooler capacity. Since the sub-cooler tube body contains a side of the collector chamber needed for the sub-cooler function also a dryer equipment no separate dryer has to be provided and mounted for the condenser module. This simplifies manufacturing, reduces the manufacturing costs and decreases the necessary mounting space for the condenser module. The sub-cooler tube body can be prefabricated separately from the condenser casing and can be dimensioned as required.

[0009] The dryer has in addition to its task to filter the refrigerant and to extract water, simultaneously also the function of a sub-cooler section of the condenser module. It is designed in its dimensions not only for the dryer task but also in view to an extreme space saving structural combination of the sub-cooler function with the condenser casing. The head block can be prefabricated as the sub-cooler tube body and can be secured thereon and offers ideal prerequisites also to provide the flow connections needed also for the condenser.

[0010] Further preferred embodiments are contained in the depending claims.

[0011] Embodiments of the inventions will be explained with the help of the drawing. In the drawing is:

Fig. 1 a front view of a condenser module, partially in section,

Fig. 2 perspectively a detail of the condenser module of Fig. 1, and

Fig. 3 a further embodiment of a condenser module.

[0012] A condenser module M in Fig. 1 includes a condenser casing G receiving a condenser part K and a sub-cooler part S which is formed as a prefabricated sub-cooler tube body R made from metal, particularly light metal like aluminium, which is separated from casing G, and which is provided below a lower side 4 of casing G with an intermediate gap 3 and at least substantially parallel to said lower side 4. Said sub-cooler tube body R consists of a round tube 1 and an outer structurally integrated longitudinal rib 2 (Fig. 2) which is substantially as thick as the casing G and protrudes beyond the outer circumference of said round tube 1.

[0013] Said sub-cooler tube body R contains inside a free collector chamber B and a dryer equipment, i.e., by means of said sub-cooler tube body said sub-cooler part S is constituted with an integrated dryer. Said dryer equipment comprises in Fig. 1 a plug 6 which is inserted in sealing fashion into an end opening 5 and which unified by means of a spacer element 21 with a cage-like shell C such that it is positioning shell C within sub-cooler tube body R. Moreover, a filter 22 is provided separated from shell C by a circumferential separation wall 23 sealingly co-acting with an inner wall 24 of sub-cooler tube body R. Shell C contains a desiccant charge D. Thanks to the separation wall 23 the refrigerant has to pass the desiccant charge D when flowing into and through filter 22.

[0014] At the opposite end of the sub-cooler tube body R a head block 7 made from metal is secured as a cover of collector chamber B, expediently welded or brazed at 15. A flow passage 8 extending into collector chamber B is formed within head block 7. Said passage 8 is open towards a connection 9 for a refrigerant pipe or an expansion valve, respectively. In a threaded bore 10 connection components can be mounted on head block 7.

Moreover, a further flow passage 11 is formed within head block 7 open towards a connection 12 for a refrigerant pipe and continued at its other side by a tube section 13. Tube section 13 connects via passage 11 connection 12 to an inlet E of condenser casing G. At locations 14 tube section 13 is brazed into head block 7 and into the condenser casing G, expediently simultaneously when brazing the condenser part K.

[0015] Between an outlet A of condenser part K and the interior of sub-cooler tube body R a flow connection is provided formed by coupling tube 16 inserted into a fitting bore in condenser casing G and a lateral bore 18 of sub-cooler tube body R and brazed in place at locations 17, expediently simultaneously when brazing the condenser part K.

[0016] Sub-cooler tube body R is secured to condenser casing G by holding brackets 19 (Fig. 2) which, e.g., are riveted at 25 and are brazed or welded to longitudinal rib 2. Said holding brackets 19 could be prolonged downwardly (indicated by dotted lines at 19') and could then be used as holding brackets for mounting the entire condenser module M.

[0017] According to Fig. 2 (indicated by dotted lines) cooling fins F could be formed at the sub-cooler tube body R. Expediently said sub-cooler tube body R is an extruded profile section cut to the needed length, and to which head block 7 is brazed.

[0018] The embodiment of Fig. 3 has the same prerequisites as Figs 1 and 2. Only the dryer equipment of dryer D provided within sub-cooler tube body R is different. Plug 6, by which the dryer equipment is positioned and sealed against the exterior is directly connected to filter 22 having separation wall 23 for co-action with inner wall 24. In continuation of filter 22 the desiccant charge D is received in a permeably bag 26 freely provided in the interior of sub-cooler tube body R.

[0019] In both embodiments the dryer equipment can be inserted and positioned in sub-cooler tube body R with the help of plug 6 and can be removed for replacement with plug 6. The longitudinal extension of the sub-cooler tube body R substantially corresponds to the longitudinal extension of condenser casing G, i.e., sub-cooler part S protrudes both side surfaces of casing G only a little. A structure could be provided at which the sub-cooler tube body R is shorter than casing G. According to Fig. 2 the dimension of sub-cooler tube body R in a direction according to the thickness of the casing G is somewhat larger than the thickness of the casing G. Within head block 7 a further flow passage could be formed useable for e.g. mounting temperature or pressure sensor or the like.

Claims

1. Condenser module, particularly for vehicle air-conditioning systems, comprising a condenser part provided within a condenser casing and at least one

sub-cooler part positioned in operation position of said condenser module below said condenser part, **characterised in that** said sub-cooler part (S) is a sub-cooler tube body (R) structurally separated from said condenser part (K), said sub-cooler tube body (R) extending substantially parallel to and along the lower side (4) of said condenser casing (G), that a flow connection is provided between said sub-cooler tube body (R) and an outlet (A) of said condenser casing (G), and that said sub-cooler tube body (R) contains a dryer equipment and at least one free collector chamber (B).

2. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** an intermediate gap (3) is provided between said lower side (4) of said condenser casing (G) and said cooler tube body (R).
3. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** said flow connection comprises a coupling tube (16) which is secured in fluid-tight fashion within a circuit of said outlet (A) and within a lateral bore (18) of said sub-cooler tube body (R), preferably by brazing or soldering.
4. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** said sub-cooler tube body (R) is secured by means of at least one holding bracket (19) at said condenser casing (G), preferably by means of a holding bracket (19) simultaneously defining a mounting means (19') of the entire condenser module (M).
5. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** said sub-cooler tube body (R) is closed at one end by means of a removable plug (6) integrated in said dryer equipment.
6. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** another end of said sub-cooler tube body (R) is closed by a head block (7) which contain a passage (8) with a connection (9) for refrigerant pipe or an expansion valve.
7. Condenser module as in claim 6, **characterised in that** said head block (7) contains a further passage (11) including a connection (12) for a refrigerant pipe and being connected to said condenser inlet (E) by means of a tube section (13) secured to said head block (7).
8. Condenser module as in at least one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** said coupling tube (16) and said tube section (13) are brazed in position simultaneously when brazing said condenser casing (G).
9. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in**

that the longitudinal of said sub-cooler tube body (R) is substantially equal to the length of the lower side (4) of said condenser casing (G), preferably is somewhat longer than said length, and that the lateral dimension of the sub-cooler tube body (R) is somewhat bigger than the thickness of the condenser casing (G).

10. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** said sub-cooler tube body (R) is a round tube (1) having an outside longitudinally continuing longitudinal rib (2) the thickness of which at least substantially corresponds to the thickness of said condenser casing (G), and that said lateral bore (18) and said holding bracket (19) are provided within and at said longitudinal rib (2), respectively.
11. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** said sub-cooler tube body (R) has outside cooling fins (F).
12. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** said dryer equipment is provided in the region of said flow connection, and that said collector chamber (B) is situated between said dryer equipment and said head block (7).
13. Condenser module as in claim 1, **characterised in that** said dryer equipment comprises at least one filter (22), at least one desiccant charge (D), and at least one separation wall (23) situated between said filter and said desiccant charge in abutting relationship to an inner wall (24) of said sub-cooler tube body (R).
14. Condenser module as in claim 13, **characterised in that** said desiccant charge (D) is provided within a permeable bag (26) or within a cage-like shell (C).
15. Dryer for a vehicular air-conditioning system, including a filter and at least one desiccant charge within a dryer housing having connections, **characterised in that** said dryer housing is designed as a sub-cooler tube body (R) with connection means for mounting below the lower side (4) of a condenser casing (G) in line position, and that said sub-cooler tube body (R) comprises in addition to said dryer equipment at least one free collector chamber (B) and a head block (7) closing said collector chamber (B).
16. Dryer as in claim 15, **characterised in that** said sub-cooler tube body (R) and said head block (7) are made from metal, particularly light metal like aluminium.
17. Dryer as in claim 15, **characterised in that** said sub-cooler tube body (R) is provided with exterior

cooling fins (F).

18. Dryer as in claim 15, **characterised in that** said head block (7) has a mounting facility (27) for a valve sensor (V).
19. Dryer as in claim 15, **characterised in that** said head block (7) has a permanent or removable mounted charge valve (Z).

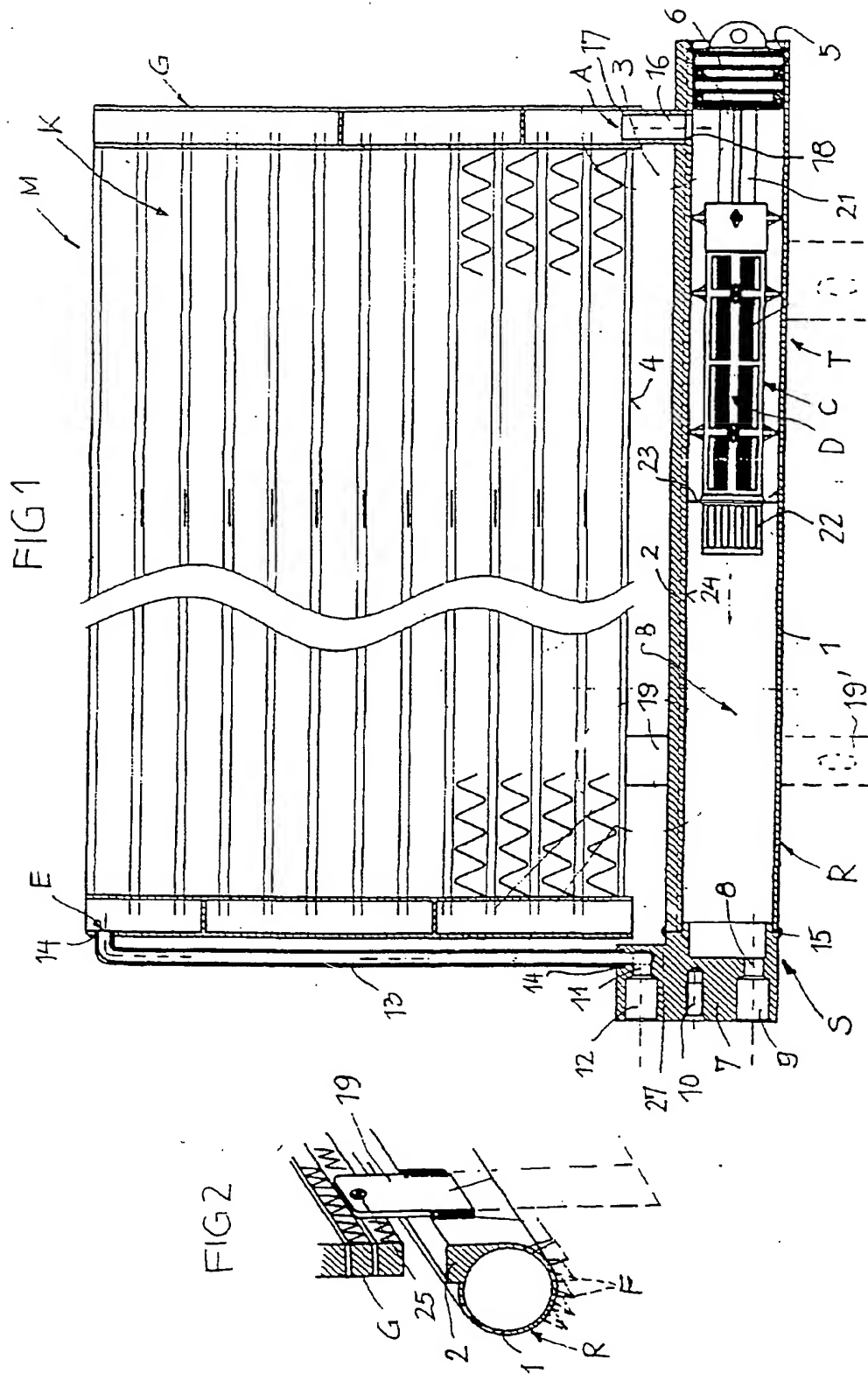
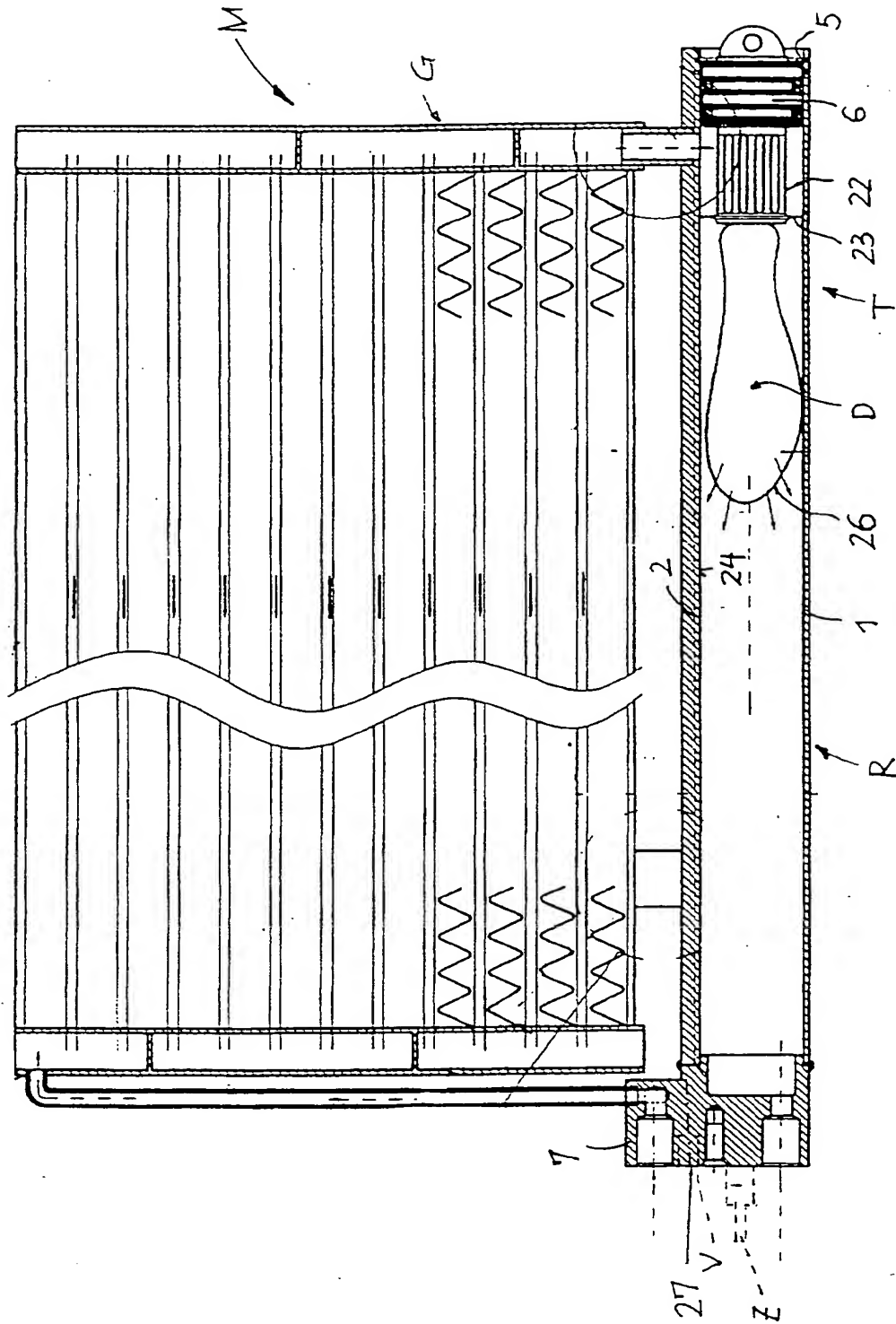


FIG 3





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 00 12 3153

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Y	* abstract; figures 1-3 *	5,11,13,14,17	
A	* column 3, line 25 - column 5, line 3 *	2,9,12-14,18,19	
Y	EP 0 854 058 A (CONTROLS GMBH DEUTSCHE) 22 July 1998 (1998-07-22)	5,13,14	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 22 March 2001	Examiner Yousufi, S
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

EPJ-CHM-903 03 02 (04/01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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